

'Books for Baghdad' drive successful in Rome

by Francis L. Crumb, Information Directorate

ROME, N.Y. — The Company Grade Officer's Council (CGOC) at the Air Force Research Laboratory's Rome Research Site is sending a text message to Baghdad University.

Nearly 5,000 books, predominantly textbooks and university-level literature, have been amassed from AFRL personnel and community donors since the project was instituted earlier this year.

"I was listening to the radio on the way to work back in mid-January and I heard a report on Baghdad University," said 2nd Lt. Scott J. Robertson, CGOC project manager. "It talked of how the students of Baghdad University were in the process of taking finals at the end of the first year of classes since Operation Iraqi Freedom, but were somewhat despondent about the quality of their education due to the lack of books."

The project was initiated in early February with donation boxes placed in the lobbies of four AFRL buildings. It was expanded in March to Rome Free Academy at the Griffiss Business & Technology Park and community sites at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the First Presbyterian Church of Rome.

A team of about 15 military and civilian personnel plan to have the books sorted and packed by the end of the month. They will then be delivered to the Al-Sharaka Program for Higher Education in Iraq, a consortium of four Oklahoma universities and five institutions of higher education in Iraq. Al-Sharaka is funded through a \$5 million cooperative agreement with the U.S. Agency for International Development.

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